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April 26, 2019

Governor Jay Inslee  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee:

On behalf of the residents of Pasco and the Pasco City Council, I am respectfully requesting that you sign into law House Bill 1499, concerning authorization for certain public facilities districts (PFDs) to acquire, construct, own, remodel, maintain, equip, re-equip, repair, finance, and operate one or more recreational facilities, other than a ski area, with voter approval. This was sponsored by Representatives Bill Jenkin and Strom Peterson, and the companion, SB 5515, was sponsored by Senators Maureen Walsh and Dean Takko.

In 2010, Representative Terry Nealey sponsored legislation which allowed the Tri-Cities to create a regional public facility district, comprised of Richland, Kennewick, and Pasco. Using that statute, the Tri-Cities Regional Public Facilities District (RPFD) went out to the voters in the summer of 2013 and asked them to approve or reject a 0.1% sales tax for the design, construction, maintenance and operation of an indoor/outdoor regional aquatics facility and water park. While, this vote failed in Kennewick and Richland, it passed in the City of Pasco with very strong support. Since the City of Pasco is still interested in seeking the authority to ask its voters to fund such a facility, through an increase in the City's sales tax, the City would like to move forward with the development of a sustainable plan and program to deliver this regional asset.

The specific language in the current PFD statute that limits Pasco's ability to construct a purely recreational aquatic facility is the definition of "special events center" which is limited to: a facility, available to the public, used for community events, sporting events, trade shows, and artistic, musical, theatrical, or other cultural exhibitions, presentations, or performances. RCW 35.57.020(1)(a).

This passed bill adds the term "aquatics facility" to the definition of "regional center" and makes a technical fix in the city public facility district statute which provides the City of Pasco PFD the opportunity to fund the same facilities as our Tri-Cities RPFD.

This minor change to the statute has been the City of Pasco's top legislative priority for the last three legislative sessions, and we urge you to sign HB 1499 which allows Pasco voters to decide the question of whether or not they wish to fund, build and operate a regionally scaled aquatics facility.

Respectfully,

Matt Watkins  
Mayor

Cc: Pasco City Council  
Representative Bill Jenkin  
Representative Strom Peterson  
Senator Maureen Walsh  
Representative Skylar Rude